65p

# THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

UFO picture gallery
Raymond Lodge returns
The Judge Hornby case
UFOs: an open secret?
The Schneider scandal
Can animals think?

146

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# THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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In next week's issue
Do mediums tend to bruise and bleed easily? Are epileptics more likely than others to become the focus of poltergeist activity? We analyse the theories about the nature of **Psychics**. And in **Animal intelligence** we look at those friendliest – and most mysterious – of animals, dolphins; just how intelligent are they? Levitation, dematerialisations, and teleportation were just some of the bizarre gifts of the Brazilian medium **Mirabelli**, who frightened some, but impressed many. Most people are familiar with the story of the **Pied Piper** of Hamelin who first rid the town of rats through the enchantment of his flute music – and then lured the children away; but is it merely a legend, or does it have a basis in fact? Psychologist **Robert Thouless** is one of the most widely respected members of the SPR: we trace his life and achievements.
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# More equal than others?

**Ancient thinkers viewed animals as being cunning, wise or ingenious; folklore abounds with tales of animal cleverness. In a new series FRANCIS KING describes modern research into the abilities of the 'brute creation'**

ALMOST 200 YEARS AGO the *Daily Universal Register* (forerunner of *The Times*) advertised a curious evening entertainment: a performance by the 'amazing LEARNED PIG'. This 'entertaining and sagacious Animal', readers were assured,

> casts accounts by means of Typographical cards, in the same manner as a Printer composes; and by the same method sets down any Capital or Surname, reckons the number of People present, tells by evoking [*sic*] on a Gentleman's Watch in company what is the Hour and Minutes; he likewise tells any Lady's thoughts in Company, and distinguishes any sorts of colours.

There were many other 'learned pigs' advertised by showmen in the 18th and 19th centuries, and although few were credited with the alarming ability to read 'any Lady's thoughts', all of them were a source of wonder to the general populace. But 18th-century 'natural philosophers' were not impressed. Such a pig, they said, was merely performing tricks taught it by its master. When, for example, a 'learned pig' was presented with the printed numbers 5 and 8 and indicated their total by making 13 taps with one of its trotters it was doing no more than obeying subtle signals given by its owner.

In this assertion the 'natural philosophers' were certainly right. But, curiously enough, the argument that led them to this conclusion was equally certainly wrong. Intelligence, they believed, was a purely human attribute, that which distinguished Man from the lower animals; the 'brute creation' was incapable of reasoning, all its spontaneous activities the product of blind instinct. Those men and women, they said, who produced anecdotal evidence of animal intelligence – a pet cat learning how to unlatch and open a door, for example – were confusing reason with its very opposite, blind trial and error.

The first real challenge to this ancient Man-centred theory of intelligence, first formulated by Aristotle over 2000 years ago, came from Charles Darwin. In *The descent of Man* he argued that animal behaviour indicated not only instinct but 'some power of reasoning'. The difference between the minds of men and those of higher animals, he wrote, 'great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not kind'.

Darwin's assertion did not meet with

For centuries performing animals have delighted crowds with what seemed to be feats of reasoning. In Elizabethan England a bay gelding called Morocco (below right) had a large stock of tricks. For example, when a silver coin was presented to him he could indicate how many pence were equivalent to it. He earned a mention by Shakespeare in *Love's labour's lost*. Two hundred years later the 'Surprising PIG' (below) was showing itself to be 'well versed in all Languages' and a 'perfect Arithmetician, Mathematician and Composer of Musick'. But it is safe to say that the feats of these performing animals, like those of their modern successors, were nothing more than tricks: responses that they had been trained to make to cues from their owners

unqualified assent. It was 'anecdotal' – based, it was true, on close observation but lacking laboratory evidence. What was needed, it was said, was controlled experimentation.

Two students of animal behaviour, Edward Lee Thorndike, an American, and Wolfgang Köhler, a German, carried out such experiments. Their results and the conclusions they drew from them seemed curiously conflicting. Thorndike, working from the 1890s onwards, found that the animals he experimented with solved problems by pure trial and error, showing no insight into the real nature of the problem before them but simply blundering about until sometimes, purely by accident, they found a solution. If, for example, cats or monkeys were put in closed containers they made random attempts to get free, persisting until they either became exhausted or, by chance, found the escape mechanism. In other words, animals lacked the human ability of insight – perhaps the key factor in intelligence.

Köhler used chimpanzees as his subjects in a famous series of experiments conducted from 1913 to 1920. And he found that his animals solved problems in a way that he regarded as evidence of insight. If, for example, bananas or other chimpanzee delicacies were hung out of reach of his subjects the animals would get at them by constructing a makeshift ladder of boxes piled on top of one another. Similarly, they would use a bamboo pole to rake in food placed well outside their cages; if the food was placed too far to be reached with one bamboo, they would fit one pole into the cavity of another in order to make a longer rake.

### National characters

These conflicting results attracted the derision of Bertrand Russell, who jokingly claimed that the experimental animals were reflecting the national characteristics of their observers. 'Animals studied by Americans,' he wrote, 'rush about frantically, with an incredible display of hustle and pep, and at last achieve the desired result by chance. Animals observed by Germans sit still and think, and at last evolve the solution out of their inner consciousness.'

In fact, there was no real conflict between the results of the two experimental series. As Köhler pointed out, Thorndike presented his monkeys and other animals with problems that could be solved only by trial and error: the escape mechanism of his boxes was hidden from view, so his subjects could not use any capacity of insight they may have possessed. The only way they *could* get free was to blunder about.

But Köhler's results have also been criticised, on the grounds that if chimpanzees are not previously acquainted with bamboos – have never been given them to play with – they do not use one as a food rake when first presented with one. This, it has been argued, shows 'lack of insight' – 'insight' here means the ability to solve a problem by thinking about it and then acting, rather than by blind trial and error.

But this kind of reasoning seems beside the point. Clearly, if a chimpanzee has lacked the opportunity to experiment with bamboo sticks by playing with them, it will be unacquainted with many of their properties – for example, with the fact that by careful manipulation the end of one can be inserted into the cavity of another. It is therefore unable to employ any possible powers of insight that it might possess in relation to the bamboo's use as a tool.

A useful analogy would be to imagine an intelligent primitive man being locked into a cage and then presented with a key. Not having any knowledge of the general properties of locks and keys, it would be most unlikely that any insight on his part would enable him to discover the use of the key: he would be forced to use trial and error in his efforts to escape.

What Köhler's chimpanzees had done was essentially the same as what human beings do when engaged in thought – they applied relevant past experience to a new situation. On this level, at least, there seems to be something in common between animal and human intelligence.

What, then, is the essential difference between Man and other animals? Is there, indeed, such a difference? One traditional definition of Man is that he is the only animal capable of using tools. But, as we have seen, Köhler's chimpanzees actually manufactured simple tools – by fitting two bamboos together to make rakes – when it served their purposes. There can be no question of this

In one of Wolfgang Köhler's classic experiments (top), food was placed just outside a chimpanzee's enclosure. Bamboo sticks were available, but they were too short to reach the food. After an hour of trying to reach the food with them, the chimp, Sultan, gave up. Then, playing with two sticks, he happened to slot one into the other. Immediately he rushed off and used them to pull in the food. Chimps also use sticks as tools in their natural surroundings. This one (top right) gets at termites by thrusting a stick into their nest, and then lifting the stick to his mouth and licking off the termites clinging to it. Chimpanzee thought processes can be probed by IQ tests (above). Here the subject, scratching its chin as if puzzled, has to match shapes

tool-using faculty being a mere imitation of human activities witnessed by the chimpanzees, for Köhler was careful never to use sticks as a means of raking while he was anywhere in the neighbourhood of his laboratory. In any case, chimpanzees and other simians in the wild have been observed to use sticks as tools. For example, chimpanzees regard termites as highly desirable items of diet. The problem is to get at the termites, which live underground in gigantic nests resembling those of ants. The chimpanzees have solved the problem by utilising sticks. These are thrust into the nest, and the infuriated termites attack them and crawl all over them. The monkeys then pull out the sticks and lick off their longed-for delicacy.

Interestingly enough, sticks are used to get termites in a radically different way by another large group of chimpanzees, biologically identical, which lives far away. This second group uses the sticks as tools to break open the termite nests: but then they will use their hands to scoop up the termites. It seems probable that in each group some monkey of genius first discovered the use of sticks as a means of getting at termites, and that this discovery was eventually observed and imitated by its fellows. Alternatively, it is a remote but exciting possibility that the discovery was originally made in only one of the groups and was 'transmitted' in slightly garbled form to the other group by means of the kind of 'morphogenetic field' posited by Dr Rupert Sheldrake (see page 1141).

However, even if this were the case, it seems almost certain that *within* the group in which the original discovery was made transmission from the genius chimpanzee to its fellows was by means of observation and imitation. For similar cultural transmission has been reported in monkeys observed over many years living in semi-wild conditions. Thus a tribe of rhesus macaques, living under wild but controlled conditions in Japan, was observed to make a fundamental change in its feeding pattern as the result of a discovery made by one talented female.

Sweet potatoes are an important part of the diet of these monkeys. A certain amount of dirt and small stones clings to them when the monkeys dig them out of the soil. For a long time all the monkeys seemed to accept the inconvenience of eating a certain amount of dirt as being in the nature of things, but eventually a young female, more fastidious and more intelligent than her companions, took to carefully washing her sweet potatoes

## Monkey business

The Japanese macaque monkeys that wash sweet potatoes in the sea or a stream (above) before eating them first learned this novelty from a particular female who decided that the taste of her food was improved by this process. That her new-fangled ways should spread through the whole of her group is not particularly surprising; but what is remarkable is that soon afterwards it was reported that macaque monkeys on other islands had begun to wash their food in exactly the same way.

There are several possible explanations for this. It is possible, though hardly likely, that someone transported individual monkeys from the food-washing group to other islands. It is even possible that some form of animal telepathy was involved. But the most exciting explanation is provided by Rupert Sheldrake's hypothesis of 'morphogenesis' (see page 1141). According to this theory, both physical and biological processes are promoted if similar processes have occurred in the past. One aspect of this is that animals of a particular species are able to draw on that species' 'memory bank'. Once one group of macaques had acquired the new habit of washing their food, the trick would become easier for other macaques, even in remote places, to invent.

in the sea before eating them. There is no doubt that she really was washing them, not just adding salt to her diet, because after a time she began to carry out the process in streams of fresh water. At first her behaviour was imitated only by her close companions, young monkeys whose minds were clearly open to radical innovations. But in time the new pre-feeding ritual spread through the entire group. The last to adopt it were the older adult males, as culturally conservative as their human equivalents, who slowly, and doubtless with much grumbling, decided they had to move with the times.

If animals can innovate and use tools, and are capable of insight, perhaps it is the use of language that separates Man from other animals? Such a view has long been advocated – in fact language has been characterised as 'a distinctly human attribute'.

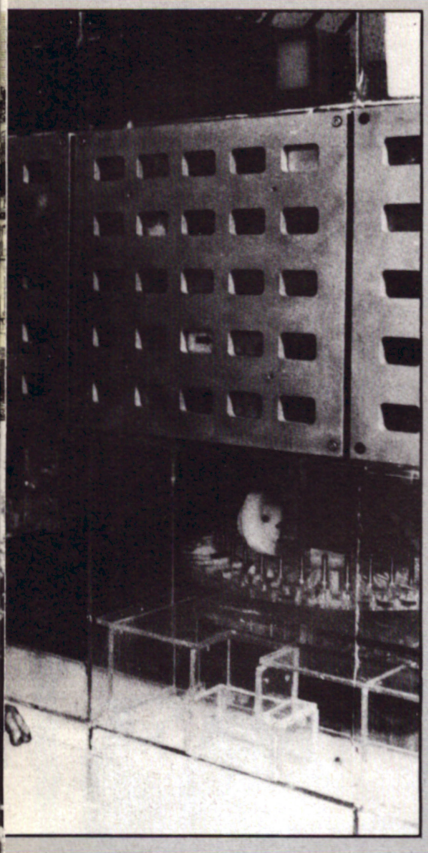
There is a certain amount of truth in this: while all animals have some mode of conveying information to their fellows – sometimes of great complexity, as the 'dance language' of honey bees is – no species has a language in the sense of a flexible range of sounds or gestures, with an extendable syntax capable of conveying abstract ideas. Nevertheless, some species use sounds in a way analogous to the words of a very simple language: for example, to symbolise objects that are not present. The vervet monkeys that live in southern Kenya provide a good example of this type of animal communication.

The vervets have four main enemies: eagles, particularly the martial eagle; snakes, particularly the python; baboons; and, most deadly of all, leopards. For each of these predatory groups the vervets have a separate warning sound – a 'word' – and their response to one 'word' is quite different from their response to another. If the 'word' for leopard is screamed by an observant monkey, all the vervets climb trees, going out on branches that are too thin to support the predator. If, on the other hand, the signal for 'eagle' is given, the vervets avoid trees and instead hide in thick undergrowth. The words for 'baboon' and 'snake' evoke still different responses. In response to the first, the vervets move away as a group, in response to the second they all stand on tiptoes, peering at the ground until they locate the snake and then move away from it.

These warning sounds have at least one thing in common with language. They are not innate, genetically programmed signals, such as the lowing of a cow or the snorting of a pig. Young monkeys have to learn them from their elders in much the same way as human infants acquire their vocabulary. And, just as human children sometimes use the wrong word, so do vervets. It will give

Above: symbols on this chimp's computer keyboard represent words. By pressing several keys in sequence she can form simple sentences

Left: vervet monkeys take refuge after hearing another monkey give the alarm call for 'leopard'. Vervets use different calls – 'words' – for different enemies



Below: Nim Chimpsky, a great chimpanzee linguist. (His name honours an eminent human linguist, Noam Chomsky.) Here Nim uses sign language to 'say' that he wants to play with the cat. In the first three pictures, reading from the left, he uses the sign sequence 'me hug cat'. Then Nim gets his wish

the signal for an eagle when a pigeon flies by or, much worse, it can get the entire tribe on tiptoes, looking for snakes, when the real threat comes from an approaching baboon.

It has been suggested that some animals with highly developed brains, such as chimpanzees, have failed to develop and use language, not because they are incapable of doing so, but because they had no evolutionary need to do so. To test this hypothesis various attempts have been made to teach chimpanzees a language.

The first such experiment, an attempt to teach a young chimpanzee English, was a failure. After much effort the animal acquired a vocabulary of four types of grunt, which were just recognisable as attempts to pronounce English words. This result was exactly what could have been expected – the larynx of a chimpanzee is mechanically incapable of producing the right sounds.

## Signs of emotion

Later experiments were far more encouraging. A female chimpanzee named Washoe was brought up by an American couple who treated her almost exactly like a human child save that they never spoke in her presence; instead they communicated with one another in Ameslan, a sign language widely used in the United States by the deaf and dumb. Washoe acquired a vocabulary of 160 Ameslan words. Some of these she was taught; others, more interestingly, she picked up from observing the gestures of her human 'parents'. Even more extraordinary, Washoe began to string signs together to express more complex concepts. Thus she spontaneously made the sign for 'bird' and the sign for 'water' when she first saw a swan. On one occasion she was taken on an outing and saw some caged animals. Her comment on these seems to have indicated both thought and emotion; 'animals unhappy' she gestured.

On coming to maturity Washoe was moved to a centre for the study of primates. Several of her fellows learned the sign language and used it to communicate with one another. One of them, a male called Ally, not only learned to understand simple spoken words but managed to translate them into Ameslan gestures for the benefit of his companions.

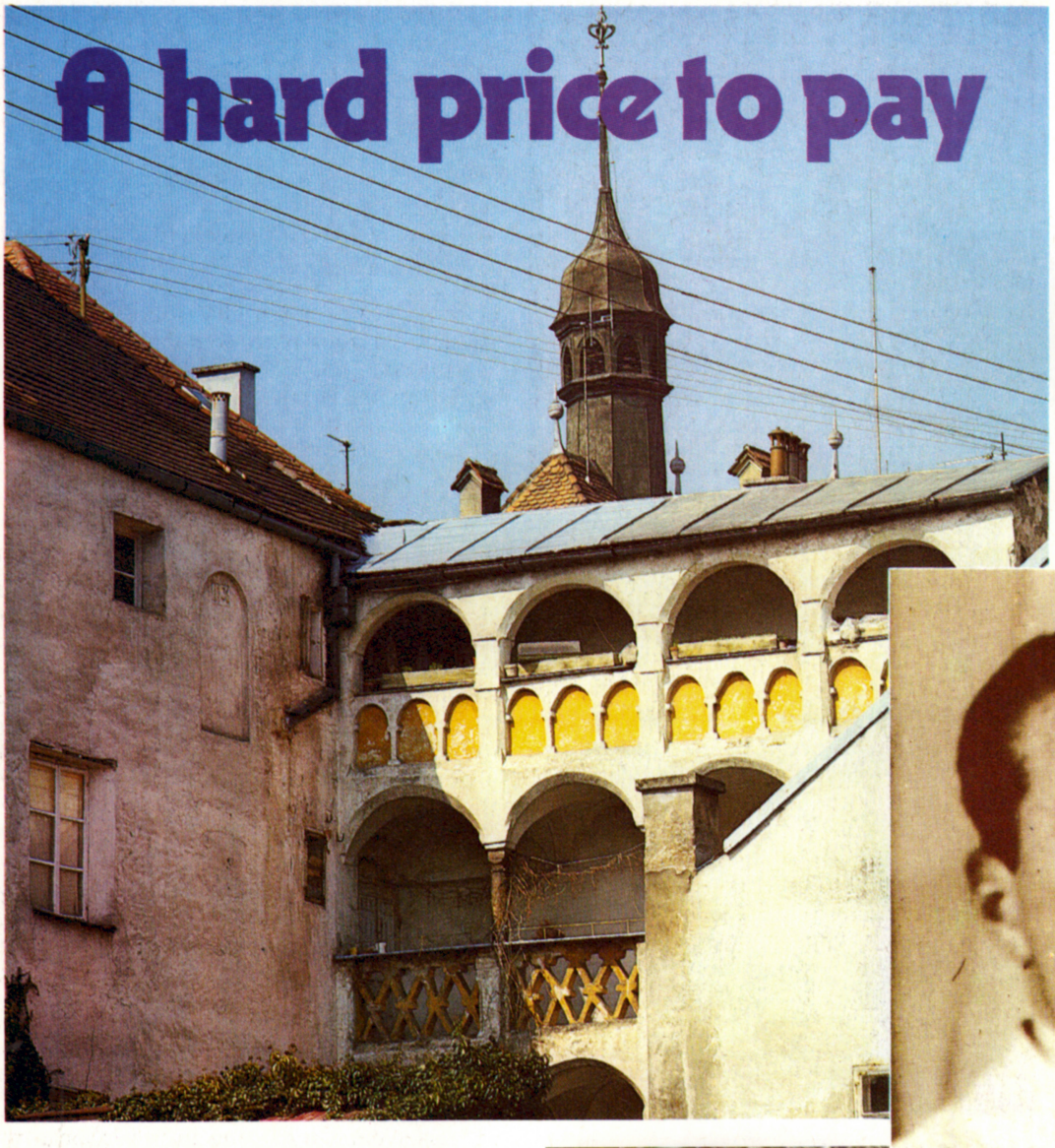
Another chimpanzee, Sarah, was taught an artificial language in which coloured plastic chips of varying shape represented a total of 13 English nouns, adjectives, and verbs. She could understand simple sentences spelt out to her in this form. For example, when she was presented with a series of chips meaning 'Sarah put apple pail Sarah put banana dish' she duly put an apple in her pail and a banana in her dish. Clearly this chimpanzee had learned not just a vocabulary but the rudiments of syntax.

This ability to obey a command never before encountered suggests an ability to conceive of a not-yet-existent state of affairs. And the ability to make and understand utterances that have never been explicitly taught to the animal is far removed from the simple stimulus-response behaviour that makes up so much of animal activity. Such remarkable behaviour deserves to be regarded as demonstrating simple language abilities.

Language research with chimpanzees is still at an early stage. But there are indications that it may ultimately revolutionise both our conception of animal intelligence and our understanding of the nature of language itself.

*On page 2926: the experiments that suggest that dolphins may be capable of insight*

# A hard price to pay



Rudi Schneider (below) grew up in Braunau, Austria (left), and was only 11 when his psychic powers were discovered. His first seances were held in a room (bottom) in his parents' apartment in the Stadtplatz

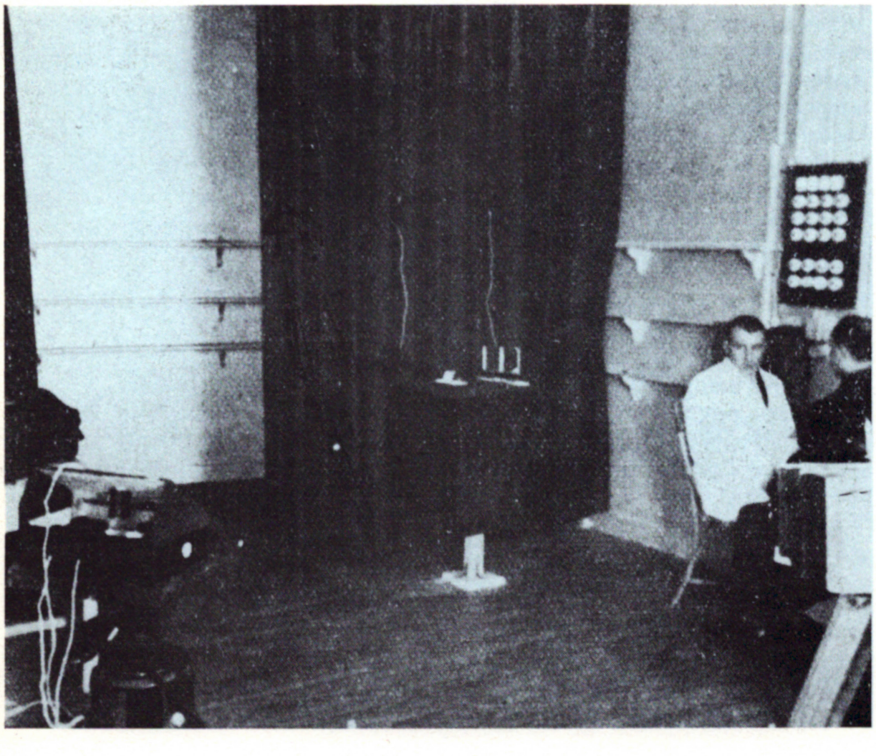
**Although rigorous investigation had convinced sceptics that the Austrian medium Rudi Schneider was genuine, his reputation was to be ultimately destroyed, ironically enough, by his staunchest supporter. ANITA GREGORY concludes her report**

OVER A PERIOD of about eight years the paranormal powers displayed by the young medium Rudi Schneider were painstakingly recorded by his father. Known as Vater Schneider's *Geisterbücher* – 'ghost books' – these documents chronicle the events at 269 seances that took place between 8 December 1923 and 1 January 1932.

Analysis of the records shows that Rudi could produce four distinct types of phenomenon: psychokinesis, materialisations, levitations of his whole body, and producing in the sitters the sensation of being touched.

To an extent the seance data are incomplete. They do not record how vigorous the movements of objects were, how often they

The phenomenon that occurred most often in Rudi's seances was the movement or manipulation of objects, such as knotting a handkerchief (right). To determine whether the medium was moving objects by fraudulent means the French investigator Eugène Osty devised an apparatus for his laboratory in Paris (below) that emitted an infra-red beam to monitor target objects. If an object was tampered with, a camera would be triggered to take a flashlight photograph. In several of Rudi's seances the infra-red beam triggered the camera – yet the resulting picture showed no evidence of fraud



occurred at each sitting, how long the materialisations lasted, and so on. However, despite this, it has been possible to collate some interesting information that seems to indicate that Rudi was very definitely not a fake.

The most common sittings were those at which only psychokinesis was observed. This happened at 28.2 per cent of the seances and became more frequent over the period. It is interesting that there is not a single sitting at which only materialisation is recorded; whenever it took place so did the movement of objects. And it is significant that the sensation of being touched, probably the most easily imagined and faked phenomenon, was experienced relatively infrequently: at 9.7 per cent of the seances.

### Home and away

To establish whether different types of seance took place at the Schneiders' home in Braunau as opposed to elsewhere, the sittings were classified rather like football matches, as either home or away. It would have been suspicious if whole classes of phenomena happened only at home. However, this was not the case: although seances seemed rather less successful when conducted away from Braunau, *all* types of phenomena reported at home also happened elsewhere.

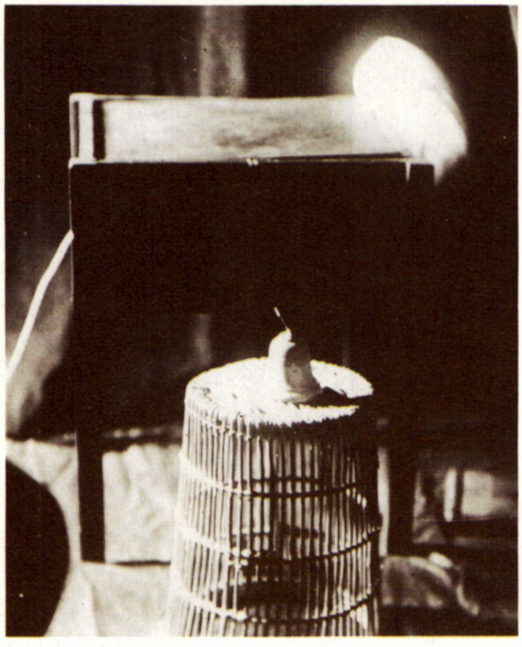
Negative seances at home were 6.4 per cent of those recorded; negative ones away were 18.7 per cent. But the percentage of the extremely impressive seances at which all types of phenomena occurred was much the same regardless of where they were held: those at home accounted for 5.3 per cent; those away 5.1 per cent.

Levitations of Rudi's body occurred least often, though this did happen in Braunau and elsewhere, including in the laboratory, where some experimenters held the medium's hands while others passed their hands underneath his body.

Another question that arises is whether the phenomena – or given sets of them – happened only in the presence of certain people. Of the 796 people whose names appeared in the seance records, 557 attended once only, and 174 participated in two to four sittings; the rest, 65, attended appreciably more often.

It does appear from a careful examination of the data that the participation of some of the most frequent sitters led to richer and more varied seances, and that few totally negative seances occurred when they were there. The presence of Rudi's brother Karl and his wife Rosa seemed to encourage phenomena, but they were also present at uneventful seances, so this does not necessarily mean they were in collusion with Rudi. In addition, all the phenomena reported also took place when these special sitters were not there.

Vater Schneider's books are not the only evidence of Rudi's mediumship. He was also



**Further reading**

Harry Price, *Rudi Schneider*, Methuen 1930
Harry Price, *Further experiments with Rudi Schneider*, National Laboratory of Psychical Research 1933

investigated outside his native Austria, in London and in Paris.

The psychical researcher Harry Price invited Rudi to London in 1929 for a series of seances at his National Laboratory of Psychical Research. According to the records, Price's seances produced much the same phenomena as had those at Braunau and Munich, when Rudi's elder brother Willi had been the medium under investigation. Handkerchiefs knotted themselves, a handbell sailed through the air, a cardboard cut-out painted with luminous paint flew about the room, sitters felt as if they were being touched by unseen hands, mists and snowman-like apparitions were seen, and objects were forcibly pulled out of the participants' hands.

A great many of the witnesses were impressed by what they saw, and Price himself was triumphant. In his book *Rudi Schneider*, in which he described the seances, Price claimed that it would not matter how many times in the future Rudi were exposed since he, Price, had now demonstrated the reality of physical phenomena.

However, this is not how things turned out and, ironically, it was Price himself who, more than anyone else, was to destroy Rudi's reputation and cast doubts on the authenticity of his phenomena.

The trouble started because Rudi was much in demand among psychical researchers, and Harry Price had come to regard him as his own property. In fact, Baron von Schrenck-Nötzing, who had earlier investigated Willi Schneider, had been one of the first to champion Rudi; but when Schrenck-Nötzing died, Price immediately tried to take charge of the medium. It was Price's possessiveness that was to ruin Rudi's career.

Among those who tested Rudi was the French researcher Eugène Osty. It was during one of his tests in Paris in 1931 that Osty made an extremely important discovery in the field of paranormal study.

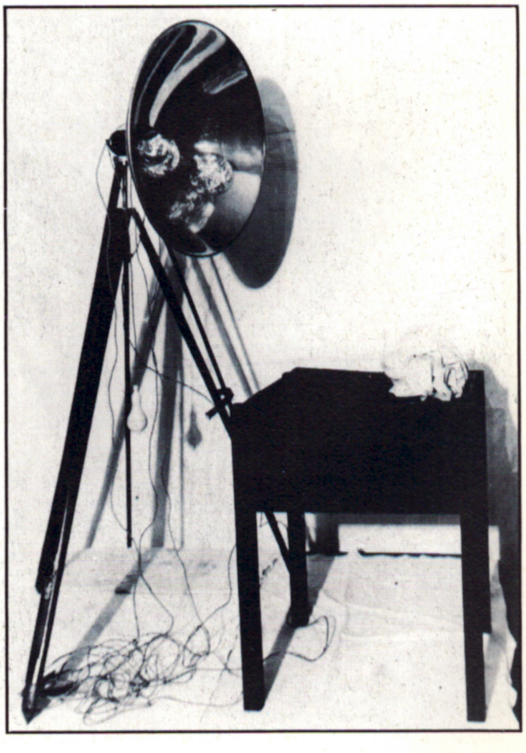
While Eugène Osty (above) was devising his infra-red system for monitoring seances, English psychical researcher Harry Price had produced his own apparatus for recording phenomena. This consisted of a box table with a loose top balanced on knife edges (right); any movement of a handkerchief or other object placed on it triggered a flashlight camera. It was this equipment that produced, in a sitting with Rudi held on 25 February 1932, the picture (above left) of a handkerchief apparently moving by psychokinesis

One of the most obvious and important issues in any case of mediumship is the question of control. A medium has to be secured or monitored in some way, particularly if sittings are held in darkness, to ensure he does not produce the phenomena in a 'normal' manner. When a medium is in a trance he may not be wholly aware of what he is doing. If he is expected to move a table he may do just that, using a foot say, but without being conscious of the fact.

During experiments with Rudi, he was either held by two people, one on either side, or he was connected to an electrical device that would signal any movement on his part. Osty hit upon the idea of laying the emphasis of control not on the medium but on the objects to be moved paranormally: the bell, handkerchief and so on. Osty and his son Marcel, an engineer, devised a system of infra-red rays that monitored these target objects; if a hand or any device were to reach out and seize any of the objects a beam would be interrupted and a camera triggered to take a photograph (this is a common monitoring technique today).

What actually happened in the course of the investigations was a surprise to all concerned. Rudi went into a trance, the spirit guide Olga, who had first appeared in the early days of Willi's mediumship, manifested and announced she would pick up the handkerchief. Immediately the infra-red beam triggered the flash of the camera and the camera clicked. But the ensuing photograph revealed nothing.

Initially it was thought that the instruments had failed. The apparatus was set up again, Rudi went into a trance, and the whole



sequence was repeated. Again the camera revealed nothing. Olga, incidentally, complained that the flash had disturbed her, and prevented her picking up the handkerchief.

The equipment was tested and the experiment repeated several times but always with the same result. Osty began to suspect the interference with the infra-red rays was itself paranormal, since the tripping of the switch always followed Olga's announcement that she would move some object. And it would seem that Osty was right for Olga was eventually persuaded to interfere with the infra-red on demand. It was as if some tenuous form of matter were emanating from the medium when his trance personality tried to reach the objects on the table. This matter, invisible in white light, was yet sufficient to interrupt or absorb infra-red radiation.

These observations – perhaps some of the most important ones of physical mediumship ever made – were repeated the following year in London in the course of experiments organised by Lord Charles Hope, using apparatus constructed under the supervision of C. C. L. Gregory, then director of the University of London Observatory.

### Price war

Harry Price re-enters the story at this point. He investigated Rudi again, this time using infra-red equipment; the results were good. Price, however, was not happy. He resented the boy being investigated by researchers other than himself, and he mounted a smear campaign against Osty and anyone else engaged in 'rival' investigations of Rudi. Price spun an extensive and complicated web of lies around Rudi's activities and finally published a photograph supposedly showing Rudi with one of his hands free during a seance. This was supposed to reveal how the boy could cheat without the experimenter's knowledge. The experimenter in the photograph was none other than Price himself.

Arguably, this photograph could have been a fake; but it really explained nothing since Rudi could not, even with a free hand, have reached the target objects and therefore could not have been responsible for the partial blocking of the infra-red beam that occurred.

There can be no doubt that Price acted in bad faith. He knew the effect publication of such a photograph would have on the public and on psychical researchers: the scandal would cast doubt on the whole issue; scientists would be reluctant to become involved; and Rudi Schneider would be discredited in the way other physical mediums had been in the past.

In the event, by the time Price issued the photograph, one year after the said seance had taken place, Rudi's phenomena had begun to wane. Most seances produced no phenomena; only very occasionally were slight movements of objects observed; even the interference with infra-red radiation was detected infrequently.

In 1957 Rudi died of a cerebral haemorrhage at the age of 49. His brother Willi outlived him by some 10 years.

The importance of Rudi's mediumship is due to the extensiveness and care with which he was investigated, to the excellence of some of the documentation, and to the infra-red experiments masterminded by Osty. Despite the accusations of fraud levelled against him, Rudi impressed and convinced many people; years later the accounts of his seances still have the ability to do just that.

The photograph that discredited Rudi, taken on 28 April 1932 at a sitting at Harry Price's National Laboratory of Psychical Research in London. The picture shows Rudi (left of the group, back to camera) with his left arm stretched out behind him, free from control. Price's ostensible object in publishing the picture was to discredit other researchers who had investigated Rudi, by showing how easy it was for the medium to evade his controller (in this case, Price himself). But publication inevitably undermined Rudi's own credibility and irrevocably damaged his reputation. His psychic powers were, in any case, on the wane; he returned to Austria, married, and set up a driving school

# Raymond reviewed

**A few weeks before the death of his son Raymond in 1915, Sir Oliver Lodge received a spirit message predicting disaster but promising comfort. Soon the bereaved family received its first communications from Raymond. ROY STEMMAN tells the story**

NEARLY A MILLION British men lost their lives in the First World War. Their courage will always be remembered, but individually most were soon forgotten except by their grieving family and friends. But for one young soldier, Raymond Lodge, death actually brought hope to the bereaved. Raymond was the youngest of six sons of Sir Oliver Lodge, the world-famous physicist, who also had six younger daughters.

Born in Liverpool in 1889, Raymond enjoyed a comfortable childhood, was educated at Bedales and then returned home to study engineering for two years at Birmingham University. After a two-year senior apprenticeship with the Wolseley Motor Company, Raymond joined a plug manufacturing company that two of his older brothers had started.

Raymond was a bright and popular boy who did not hesitate to volunteer for service, at the age of 25, when the First World War began. In September 1914 he was commissioned into an infantry regiment, the South Lancashires, as Second Lieutenant, and after training in Scotland and Liverpool he was sent to France on 15 March 1915. He joined his battalion at the front in Flanders and by the end of the month he was in the trenches.

For the next three months, Raymond was in the thick of the action in the front line, serving six or seven days at a time in the trenches, then spending a similar period in support a mile (1.6 kilometres) behind the front line but still subject to shell fire. He wrote home two or three times a week, giving graphic descriptions of the horrors of trench warfare, but somehow managing to remain cheerful.

Meanwhile, in England, Sir Oliver Lodge continued with his scientific work – and with his interest in psychical research, which had been aroused in 1883 by thought. transference experiments. A year later he had joined the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), and he had served as its president for a three-year period from 1901.

His interest in telepathy broadened to include spirit communication, and in time Lodge became convinced of the existence of a life after death. His concern for the subject was well-known, and he frequently received messages from mediums, so he was not surprised, early in September 1914, to find in his post a letter from the USA giving details of a seance by one Mrs Leonora Piper, a famous trance medium. She had apparently been given the following spirit message from one of the SPR's founders, F. W. H. Myers, for Lodge:

> Myers says, you take the part of the poet and he will act as Faunus.
> FAUNUS.
> *Protect*. he will U.D. [understand]
> What you have to say Lodge. good work, ask Verrall, she will U.D.
> Arthur says so.

There followed some confusing lines apparently trying to resolve doubt about the identity of Arthur; and the message ended with the words, 'you got mixed up but Myers is straight about Poet and Faunus.'

Lodge did not understand the meaning of the message, but he wrote immediately to Mrs Verrall of Cambridge. She was a classical scholar and an automatic writing medium who had been involved in the famous SPR cross-correspondences (see page 478). Her husband Arthur, now dead, had also been a classical scholar.

Mrs Verrall replied that the message was an allusion to the Roman poet Horace, who in one poem had described how the Roman countryside god Faunus had protected him by lightening the blow when a tree fell on him.

But what did the message mean? Lodge gave the matter little attention, except to speculate that the impending blow might be some financial misfortune, and went to Scotland on holiday.

On 15 September Lodge and a friend set out to play a round of golf. They had both been looking forward to the game, but in the event Lodge was in a state of acute depression and played so badly that after seven

Killed, like so many other young men, in the horrifying conditions of the Flanders trenches during the First World War (bottom), Raymond Lodge (below) apparently tried to comfort his family by communicating through a number of mediums. One of his messages, received by his mother in 1918, concerned the memorial tablet that his family had erected in a local church (right). Apparently highly amused, he pointed out that the day of his death was a Tuesday – not, as the inscription reads, a Wednesday. 'You can't eradicate it. . . . [It] will have to stand forever'

Remember RAYMOND LODGE, Sec. Lieutenant
2nd South Lancashire Regiment, beloved son of
SIR OLIVER and LADY LODGE of this parish
who gave his life for his Country.
He was born Jan: 25 1889, and was killed in
action in Flanders about noon on Wednesday
Sept: 14 in the year of Our Lord 1915
aged 26 years.
Whoso bears the whole heaviness of the wronged worlds weight
And puts it by,
It is well with him suffering, though he face mans fate
How should he die?
SWINBURNE.

holes they decided to abandon the game and return to the hotel.

Two days later Lodge received a telegram from the War Office informing him that Raymond had been killed. His young son had been leading his men back from the front line trenches when he was hit by shrapnel and severely injured in the back. He died a few hours later, on 14 September.

Raymond's death had occurred less than 24 hours before his father's acute bout of depression, and Lodge wondered, later, if there were a connection between the two. But even more significant, perhaps, was the Faunus message. Writing about Raymond's death, Lodge talked of 'the blow – which it is permissible to say was a terribly severe one.' Was this the blow that Myers had hinted, from the spirit world, that he would lighten?

If it was, it suggested that Myers knew in advance of young Raymond's death. And if that tragic event was to be cushioned, that could be done only by providing the Lodge family with irrefutable evidence of Raymond's continued existence in a new realm. And that is indeed, it seems, what the young Lodge son, aided by Myers and others in the spirit world, set out to provide – with sufficient success that Lodge published an account of these spirit messages in his book *Raymond, or life and death.*

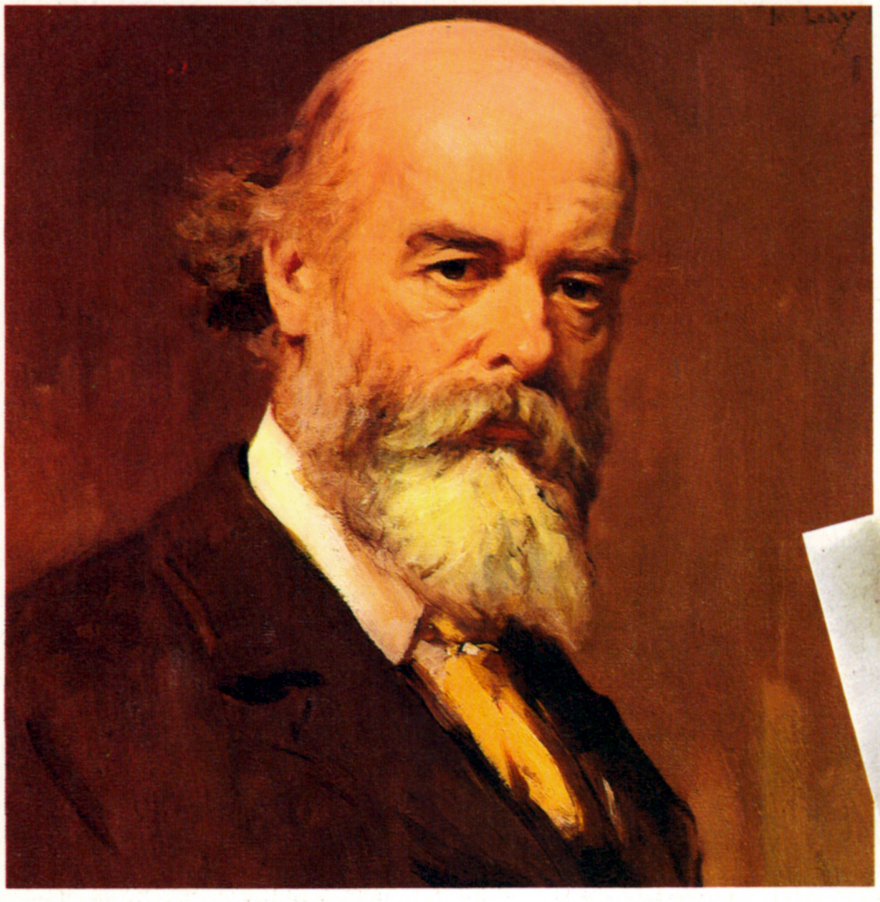
Lodge's biographer, Professor W. P. Jolly, in his book *Sir Oliver Lodge, psychical researcher and scientist*, observes:

> Seldom can a work of research and philosophy have been more opportunely published, when almost everyone in England was mourning the loss of some friend or relative. The interest aroused by the book was quite sensational: there were six editions in little over a month, and then it settled down to a steady rate of two new editions a year for the rest of the war, going into twelve editions in all before being superseded in 1922 by a new version called *Raymond Revised.*

The book, with its verbatim accounts of seance messages received through professional and amateur mediums, as well as descriptions of the Lodge family's own table-turning sessions, was an excellent introduction to Spiritualism and gave a useful insight into the techniques used for spirit communication.

### Incognito visits

As a scientist, Lodge put a heavy emphasis on the status of the communications as evidence, and it seemed that Raymond himself took pleasure in trying to provide tests to prove his survival. Lodge was a well-known public figure and would have been recognised by most mediums. Lady Lodge, however, was able to visit a number of mediums anonymously, among them A. Vout Peters. Her first seance with this medium took place on 27 September 1915. During the session the medium's guide, 'Moonstone', told her that what he was about to say was so important that he would speak sufficiently slowly that she would be able to write down every word. The message was, 'Not only is the partition so thin that you can hear the operators on the other side, but a big hole has been made.' Lodge was particularly astonished at this passage, and later described it as 'a remarkably evidential and identifying message' because of its similarity to a passage



in his book *Survival of Man*:

> The boundary between the two states – the known and the unknown – is still substantial but is wearing thin in places; and like excavators engaged in boring a tunnel from opposite ends, amid the roar of water and other noises, we are beginning to hear now and again the strokes of the pickaxes of our comrades on the other side.

At the same seance, Peters said that the communicator – Raymond – was talking about photographs including one in which he was one of a group. 'He is particular that I should tell you this,' the medium said. 'In one you see his walking-stick.'

Lady Lodge could not remember a group photograph in which her son had appeared, and enquiries indicated that the medium was wrong. The matter was dropped. Then, on 28 November 1915, the Lodges received a letter from a Mrs B. P. Cheves, mother of the medical officer of the 2nd South Lancashire Regiment, saying that her son had sent her copies of a group photograph in which Raymond appeared. Did they have a copy? If not, she would gladly send them one.

While the Lodges waited for the photograph, the scientist decided to see if Raymond could communicate any more information about the group picture through another medium. Lodge had arranged a seance with the trance medium Gladys Osborne Leonard, an outstanding psychic who had a spirit child control named Feda who allegedly spoke directly to sitters.

Lodge asked Feda to ask Raymond about the photograph and how he looked. Was he standing up? 'No, he doesn't seem to think so,' said Feda. 'Some were raised up round; he was sitting down, and some were raised up at the back of him. Some were standing and some were sitting, he thinks.'

Feda said that Raymond had the impression that there were about a dozen people in the picture, if not more. Asked by Lodge if they were soldiers she replied, 'He says yes – a mixed lot.' Asked if he had a stick, the spirit control answered, 'He doesn't remember that. He remembers that somebody wanted to lean on him, but he is not sure if he was taken with someone leaning on him. But someone wanted to lean on him he remembers.'

When asked by the scientist whether the photograph was taken outside, Raymond replied, through the medium, 'Yes, practically' – a reply that amused Feda, who pointed out that either it was or it was not. Lodge suggested that it might have been a shelter and Feda then described an image she was being shown with vertical lines in the background.

On the strength of these two seance messages, Lodge built up a written description of how he thought the picture would look when it arrived. On 7 December he posted this to J. Arthur Hill, who was his unofficial secretary for psychical matters. On the same day, in mid afternoon, Mrs Cheves's package arrived to reveal a photograph of a group of soldiers, 21 in all, with five squatting in front, seven seated in the

Above: Sir Oliver Lodge (1851–1940), well-known physicist and psychical researcher, and father of Raymond. In September 1914 he received a letter from an American medium containing a spirit message to him from his fellow psychical researcher, the deceased F. W. H. Myers. The message said Lodge would take the part of the poet while Myers would 'act as Faunus'. The classical scholar Mrs A. W. Verrall of Cambridge (right) – who knew both Myers and Lodge – interpreted the message as meaning that Myers would shield Lodge from some kind of blow. Less than two weeks later Lodge's son Raymond was dead – and very soon afterwards his family began to receive spirit messages from him. Could this have been the comfort Myers had promised?

Left: Gladys Osborne Leonard. When Raymond's brother Lionel visited her, incognito, Mrs Leonard described two spirits that were apparently in the room. One appeared to be Raymond himself; the other was tall, well-built, elderly with a beard around his chin, but no moustache, and somehow connected with the letter W – a good description of Lionel's grandfather (below), whom the family called 'Grandfather W'

Below right: a photograph of a group of officers at the front. Raymond Lodge is in the front row, second from the right. The photograph was sent to the Lodges after Raymond's death – but before it arrived, 'Raymond', speaking through Mrs Leonard's spirit guide, described it: 'somebody wanted to lean on him'. An officer seated behind Raymond is leaning his hand on Raymond's shoulder – no other officer is touching another in this way

second row, and nine standing at the back in front of a temporary wooden structure that looked as if it might be a hospital shed.

Raymond was squatting in the front row, second from right. A walking stick or regulation cane was lying across his feet and a soldier sitting behind him was resting a hand on his shoulder – the only person in the photograph to be doing so.

When Lodge's book about Raymond appeared in print, some critics dismissed it as the gullible ravings of a bereaved father. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Sir Oliver Lodge was convinced of a life after death and communication with the dead long before his son was killed. But his beliefs were not shared by the rest of his family: they sought their own proof.

On 17 November 1915 Lionel Lodge, Raymond's brother, went to London in the hope of having a seance with Mrs Leonard. He had written to her in advance, but on plain paper not from his own address, and unsigned, telling her he would be arriving at a certain time. However, he sent it to the medium's old address, and she had not received the letter when he arrived, a complete stranger who had not even apparently made an appointment.

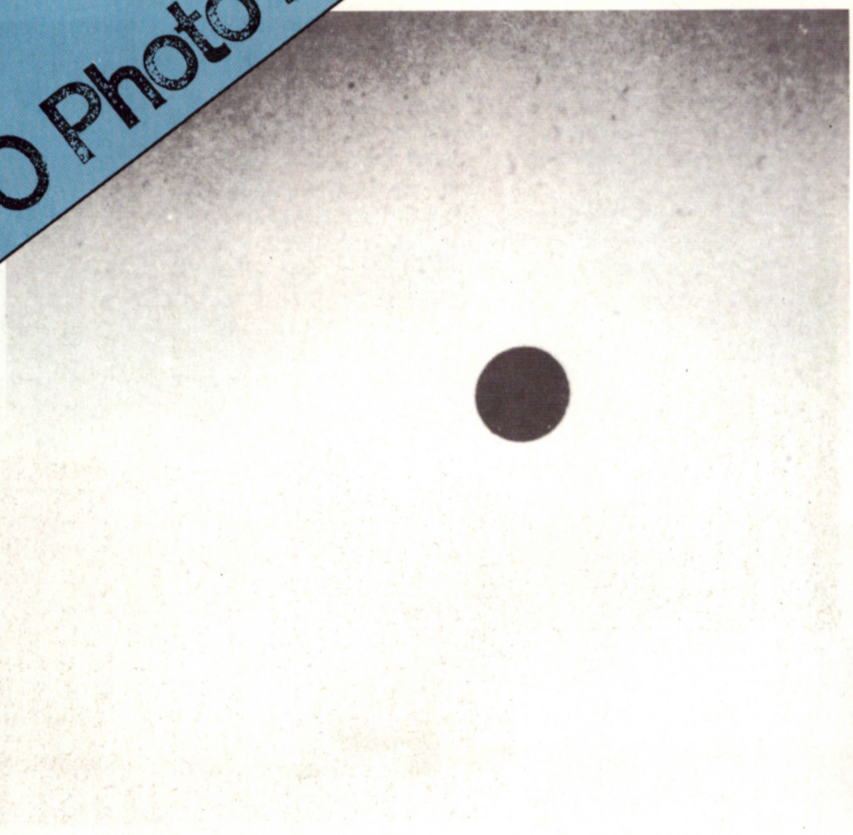
Mrs Leonard answered the door, took him in at once when he said he wanted a sitting, drew the blind and lit a red lamp. As soon as she was entranced and Feda spoke, Lionel was told that two spirits were present. One was elderly: tall, well built with a beard around his chin but no moustache – a description that seemed somehow to worry Feda. She added that the letter W was held up. This was a very good description of Lionel's grandfather, known to members of the family as 'Grandfather W'.

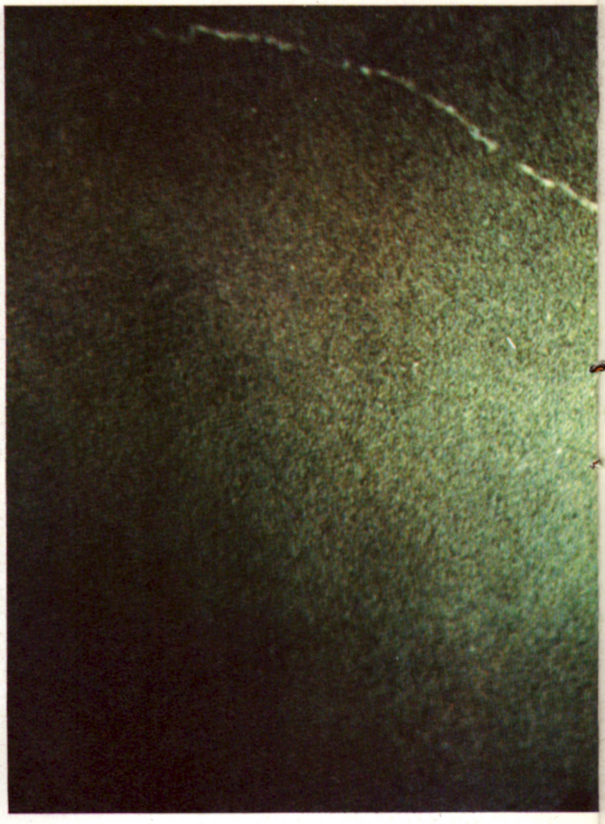
The medium's spirit control then described a younger man, about 23 or 25. After giving a description, she said she could not see him. 'He won't let Feda see his face; he is laughing.' Then, whispering, she said, 'L, L, L,' adding aloud, 'This is not his name; he puts it by you.' Whispering again she said, 'Feda knows him – Raymond. Oh, it's Raymond! That is why he would not show his face, because Feda would know him.'

This, and much more, impressed the Lodge family and many of the readers of *Raymond*. Raymond's death and apparent communication from the spirit world reinforced Sir Oliver Lodge's own beliefs. And in sharing them with the public, he did much to lighten the blow of bereavement that had fallen on so many families.

'A band of eager workers is constructing a bridge, opening a way for us across the chasm,' he concluded. 'Communication is already easier and more frequent than ever before; and in the long run we may feel assured that all this present suffering and bereavement will have a beneficent outcome for humanity. So may it be!'

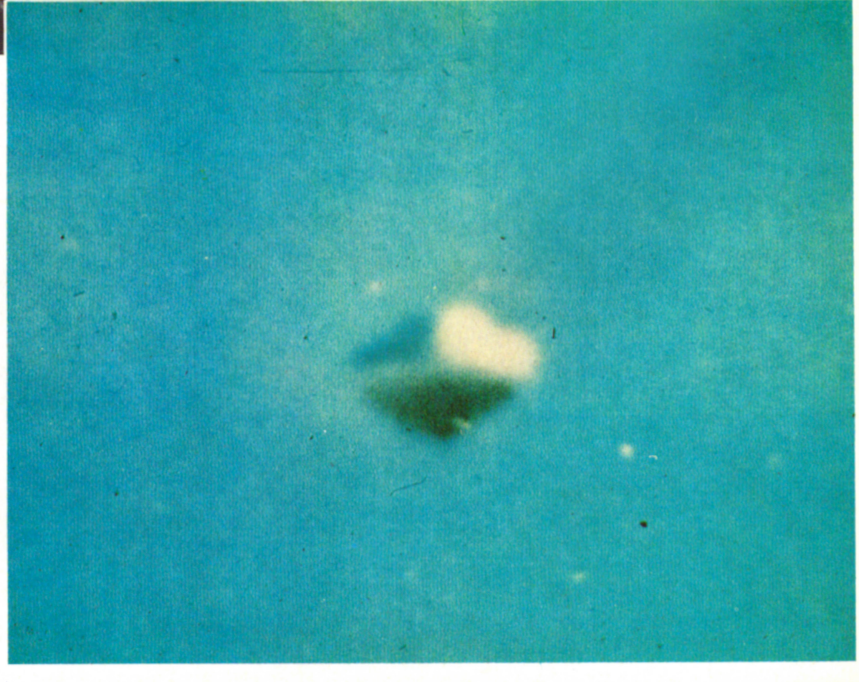
# UFO Photo File

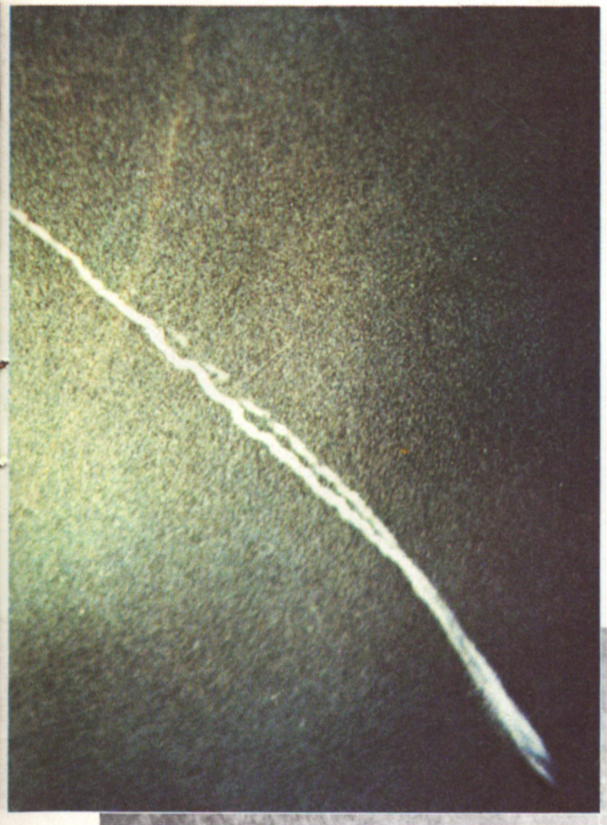




Below: this UFO positively sought publicity by floating over a football stadium in Mesa, Arizona, in the south-western United States, on 11 November 1972. Hundreds of witnesses watched it pass over. Most accounts say that it was moving with the wind, though there are some conflicts in the reports. However, its motion seemed to be rather too fast for a balloon. Ground Saucer Watch determined that the object was probably about 25 feet (7.5 metres) in diameter. At about this time experimental aluminium weather 'balloons' were being launched: this could be one.

Above: dozens of witnesses watched this dark object fly slowly overhead at Timberlake, Maine, in the eastern United States on 7 July 1958. The watchers were mostly children, attending a summer camp, but there were three adults among them. One, Mr Johnson, took two photographs, including this one. The witnesses reported that all sounds of animals and birds ceased during the brief period of the sighting; the object itself gave out a humming sound. Its speed was roughly that of a small aircraft. The photographs were analysed by the UFO research organisation Ground Saucer Watch with the aid of a computer. They concluded that the object was about 26 to 33 feet (8 to 10 metres) in diameter and was at an appreciable distance from the witnesses – at least 440 yards (400 metres). This rules out any possibility that someone had played a hoax with a model. Ground Saucer Watch have placed the pictures on their list of 'bona fide' UFO photographs.

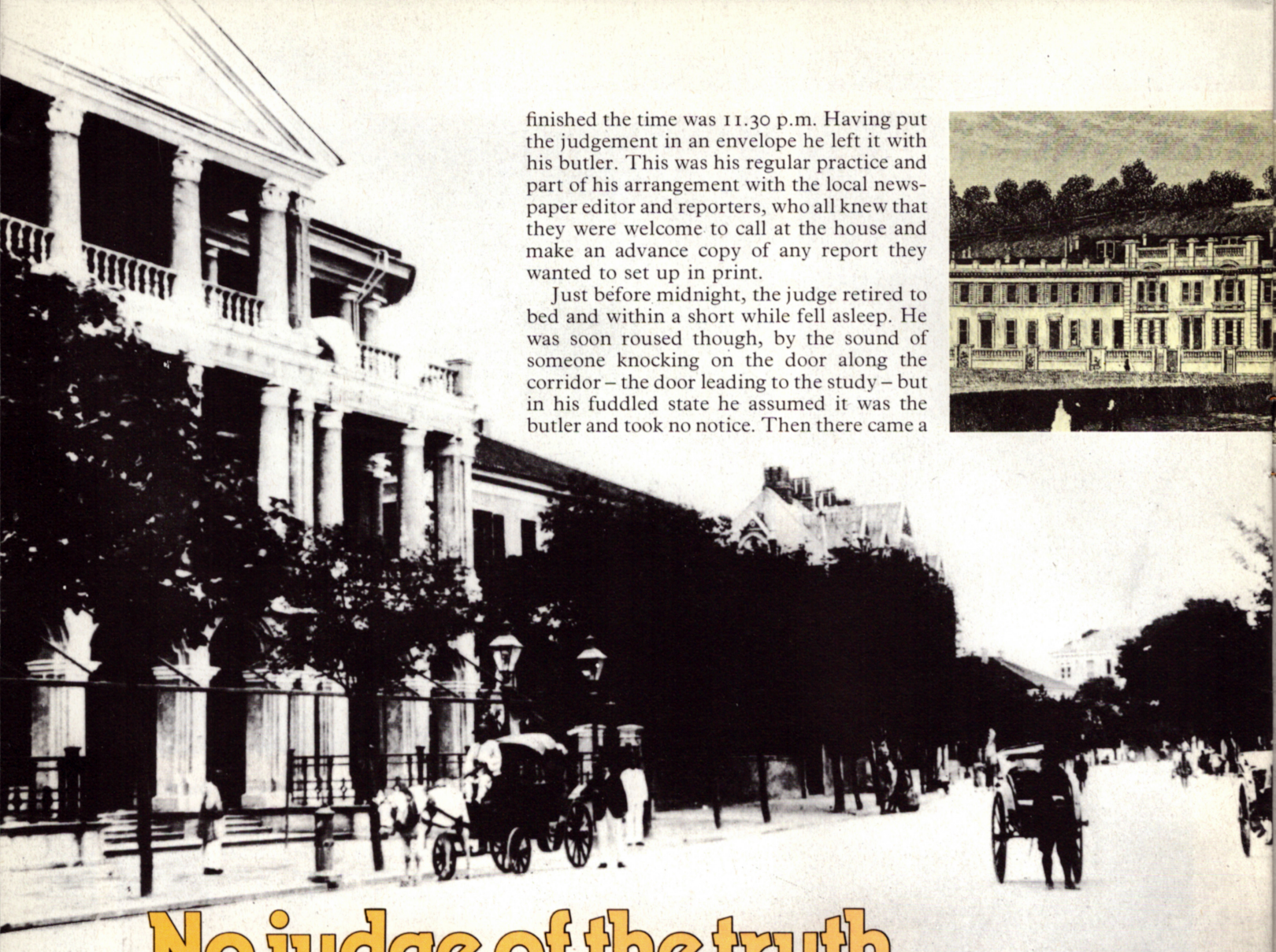




Above left: a UFO with a 'contrail'. On 25 March 1975 several witnesses saw an orange-coloured object fall from the sky 'at a tremendous speed'. The leading portion of the object was cigar-shaped, and made short, erratic movements. The eyewitnesses' descriptions are confirmed by this picture. The incident took place in Japan.

Above: a jewel-like cluster of lights in the dawn sky over Motunau, New Zealand. The amateur cameraman who took this striking picture on 27 October 1979 did not see the lights: his subject matter was a small fishing boat, completely lost in the shadows at the bottom of this badly under-exposed picture. Photographs taken a few moments before and after this one do not show the lights. When highly magnified, they appear to be in rows of eight, six and five. Each light is apparently double. *Xenolog*, a UFO magazine, investigated the case thoroughly. Its editors point out that sensational UFO sightings had taken place near Motunau not long before: motion pictures of UFOs had been made from an Argosy aircraft flying parallel to the coast in December 1978 (see page 58).

Left: one of the first UFO photographs ever taken. Apart from the photographer, one other person witnessed this object circling over Phoenix, Arizona, on 7 July 1947, making a roaring noise. It is remarkably similar to Kenneth Arnold's descriptions of nine discs that he had seen flying over Mount Rainier, 'like saucers skipping over water', less than two weeks before. The photographer handed the picture over to officials; years later, ufologists got it back, and Ground Saucer Watch has placed it on its 'bona fide' list.



# No judge of the truth

**Witnesses of paranormal events are notoriously unreliable, so the SPR was delighted to receive details of a ghost who had visited no less a person than Judge Hornby – surely an impeccable witness. But, as MELVIN HARRIS proves, the case is highly suspect**

IN FEBRUARY 1884, the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) received a most remarkable letter from a retired judge. The judge was Sir Edmund Hornby, formerly with the Consular Court at Shanghai. His letter described his encounter and dealings with a very solid-looking phantom. What is more, his account was backed up by the testimony of his wife and mother-in-law.

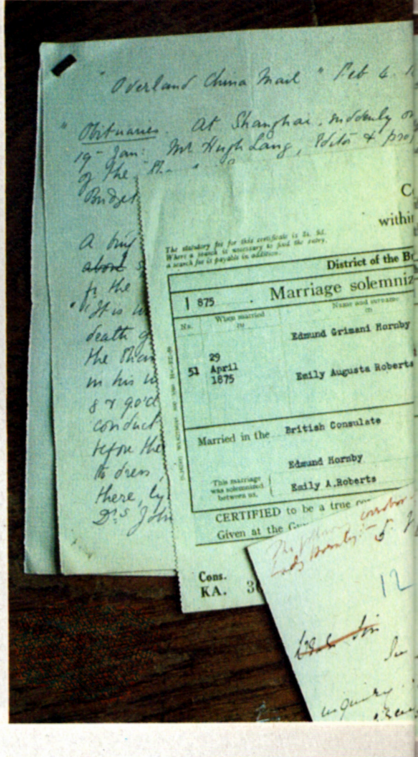
The judge's story was set in Shanghai some nine years earlier. On the day in question, he had spent a whole evening writing out details of a judgement he was due to give the next morning. He had taken longer than usual for this was quite an important Admiralty case and when he had finished the time was 11.30 p.m. Having put the judgement in an envelope he left it with his butler. This was his regular practice and part of his arrangement with the local newspaper editor and reporters, who all knew that they were welcome to call at the house and make an advance copy of any report they wanted to set up in print.

Just before midnight, the judge retired to bed and within a short while fell asleep. He was soon roused though, by the sound of someone knocking on the door along the corridor – the door leading to the study – but in his fuddled state he assumed it was the butler and took no notice. Then there came a tap on the bedroom door. This time he was sure it must be the butler, so he called out 'Come in!'; but when the door opened, in walked the chief journalist and editor of the local newspaper.

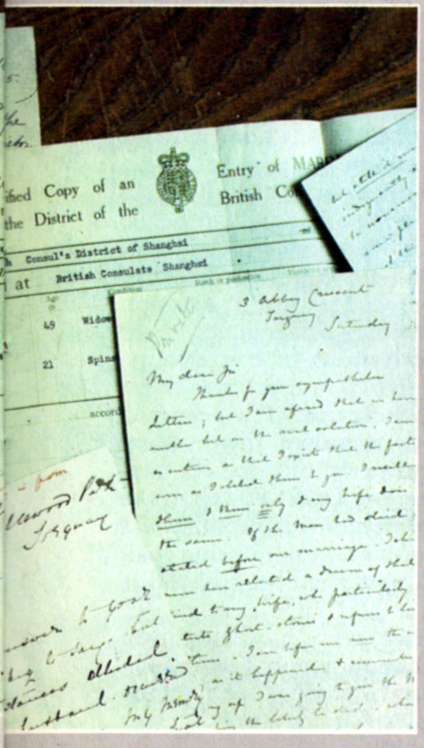


The journalist was well-known to the judge and quite unmistakable, since his head seemed to lie sideways on one shoulder, giving him the appearance of being deformed. The judge was not startled by his presence as he simply assumed that the man had come looking for the judgement paper, and he said, 'You've mistaken the room – but the butler has the judgement, so go and get it.' The reporter made no attempt to leave; he just stood where he was, looking sad and deadly pale, then he asked to be told details of the judgement – then and there.

At this, the judge grew angry and ordered him from the room. In fact, he felt like leaping out of bed and throwing him out but there was something so tragic about the man's demeanour that Judge Hornby resisted the impulse, got out of bed and grudgingly dictated a brief summary. He concluded the interview by saying, 'This is the



Above: Abbey Crescent, Torquay, where Judge and Lady Hornby lived in 1884, when the judge – then retired from the Consular Court in Shanghai (left) – first wrote to the SPR about his alleged encounter, and conversation, with a ghost some years before. The SPR was delighted with such an apparently watertight case, but as the file (below) grew, so did doubts about Hornby's story. For example, although his wife backed up his story, their marriage certificate shows they were not married until after the ghostly meeting was alleged to have taken place




last time I will allow a reporter in my house.' The journalist looked at him wistfully and replied, 'This is the *last* time I shall ever see you again – anywhere.' Then he left. With that the judge went back to bed noticing that the time was exactly 1.30 a.m.

Sir Edmund's wife was a heavy sleeper, but she had been vaguely aware of something going on, and on his return to bed she woke up fully and asked what the fuss was all about. He told her what had happened, then they both went to sleep without any further discussion. But the next morning found the judge pondering the events of the previous night. Going over the details again with his wife, he explained: 'The poor fellow looked awfully ill.' Despite this Sir Edmund made it clear that the journalist was due for a reprimand when he saw him next.

When Judge Hornby reached his courtroom and looked for the journalist he could not find him anywhere; at 10 a.m. he discovered why, for the court usher came in to say that the reporter had died some eight and a half hours earlier.

Apparently, he had been writing articles in his room until late at night and at midnight had only one more item to finish and that was the report of the judge's Admiralty case. But he was never to complete the copy for the next day's edition, for at 1.30 a.m. his wife found him dead at his desk.

### 'In the flesh or the spirit'

As soon as he heard this grim news, Sir Edmund wrote a note to Lady Hornby saying: 'I shall be home at one . . . poor Lang died last night and I am certain that he visited me in the flesh or in the spirit last night, as I told you.' Next, Sir Edmund sent a magistrate to question the journalist's wife and servants, for he needed to know if the man could have possibly left his rooms. But the answers he received showed that the journalist was too ill to have journeyed out. He had been suffering from pains in his chest throughout the course of the evening, before his heart finally gave up beating at 1.30 a.m. – just as the usher had said. The post-mortem report confirmed this.

The judge's story first appeared in print in the *Journal* of the SPR; thus, at first, it was known only to a very small circle. But the SPR's secretary was so excited and delighted with the case that he arranged for it to be published in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine. His excitement was understandable since the story seemed to be unshakeable evidence for the paranormal. Indeed, Edmund Gurney of the SPR had diligently checked out the account with Lady Hornby and her mother and found them 'model witnesses'.

If the story had never appeared in magazine form it probably would have gone unchallenged and been repeated over and over again as an impregnable true event. But as it was, a copy of the magazine reached Shanghai where it was read by a certain Frederick Balfour – his reaction was one of amusement and amazement. Balfour was a newspaper editor who had known Sir Edmund well. He had also known the dead newspaperman – Hugh Lang – and he promptly wrote to the *Nineteenth Century* challenging the story. It was only then that the truth emerged. It turned out that Hugh Lang had not died at home at 1.30 a.m., but at his office, at 9 a.m. – following a good night's sleep. And there was no inquest, since it was not needed. Apart from that, the death occurred on 19 January 1875, and on that date there was no Lady Hornby! At that time, Sir Edmund was a widower – in fact, he did not re-marry until three months *after* Hugh Lang's death.

### Wife, what wife?

Once Balfour's letter appeared, obituaries were checked and Sir Edmund's whole story fell to pieces. He sadly agreed that on the day of Lang's death he was not married – he even added that, at the time, he knew his future wife just well enough 'to bow to and exchange civilities'. So those three vital discussions with Lady Hornby just could not have taken place; thus the evidence to back up the tale simply vanished.

Edmund Gurney himself could offer no explanation – he simply repeated Sir Edmund's words that 'his memory must have played him the most extraordinary trick.' And Gurney blamed himself for failing to check the Shanghai newspapers before accepting the tale as true. The case itself was deleted from the records of the SPR.

Strangely enough, however, in 1969 an attempt was made to argue that 'the story was stopped, not because it was proved untrue, but because it was socially embarrassing.' According to this line of reasoning, the judge had been living with his future wife prior to the date of their marriage – when the story unfortunately revealed this 'shameful liaison', he was obliged to protect the honour of his wife by accepting that the account of the phantom journalist was absurd.

This attempted defence is ingenious but quite unacceptable, since Judge Hornby's account does not stand or fall on the testimonies of his wife and mother-in-law alone. He claimed that the time and place of Lang's death had been confirmed by the court usher, a magistrate, Lang's family and a coroner's inquest – yet all of those claims were found to be false. Perhaps the last words in this puzzling case can be fittingly left to the judge himself, for he wrote:

> If ever there was an unconscious or unintentional liar I am the man. Please see that on my tombstone is graven
>
> Here lies a liar
> Unconscious of truth
> Should he become a briar
> Its tangled twigs
> Will typify his mind.

# UFOs: an open secret

**As UFOs continue to be reported all over the world, governments can no longer deny that such things exist – but, as JENNY RANDLES shows, official attitudes tend to be alarmingly inconsistent**

THE GOVERNMENTS of the world seem, despite their protestations to the contrary, to take the subject of UFOs very seriously. The US government certainly does, and refuses to release key documents because, it claims, they would compromise national security. Britain maintains a 'stiff upper lip' on the subject (see page 2866) but all the evidence points to an active interest in UFOs at a high level. Several European nations admit openly to the reality of UFOs; a leading scientist working with GEPAN, France's former government-funded UFO research project, went further and proclaimed that the phenomenon is produced by an intelligence that is actually the dominant form of life on this planet. Such widespread interest seems inconsistent with the commonly held opinion that ufology is, at best, a 'pseudo-science' – and should stay that way.

Above: UFO enthusiasts at the United Nations, including Dr Jacques Vallée (centre), the President of Grenada, Sir Eric Gairy (centre back) and Dr J. Allen Hynek (top left), discuss the global significance of UFOs

Several of the smaller nations – such as those in South America – have issued bold statements concerning the reality and nature of UFOs. The media coverage of UFO reports in these countries is fairly extensive and rarely critical, so it is hardly surprising that they should offer their view that UFOs are representatives of a higher intelligence.

In 1978 the President of Grenada, Sir Eric Gairy, tried to force a United Nations debate on UFOs. Eventually he succeeded; several impressive depositions were made including contributions by Dr J. Allen Hynek and Dr Jacques Vallée. But nothing beyond a resolution calling for further action emerged, and Sir Eric was unable to push for the resolution to be implemented.

The situation in the Soviet Union is characteristically complicated and obscured by officialdom. We know that parapsychology has always been treated with respect in the USSR but very little was known about the official Soviet attitude to UFOs until 1967, when Dr Jacques Vallée paid a visit there. As it happened, his trip coincided with the foundation of a scientific UFO research group, whose head was Dr Felix Zigel, professor of cosmology at Moscow's Institute of Aviation and the man responsible – under government direction – for the training of cosmonauts. Working with him in UFO research was an air force major called Stolyarov. They claimed that the authorities promised them, when their group was properly established, that they would be given the 1500 UFO reports in their possession. However this promise was never kept, the group eventually being told: 'You are too small, and the UFO problem is too big.'

Stolyarov and Zigel were, however, given permission to appear on national television, which they did on 10 November 1967, telling the Soviet citizens: 'UFOs are a very serious

Above: Hollywood's extra-terrestrial (E.T.) proves that he loves mankind. And despite his unpromising appearance, this creature has become a world-wide symbol of Man's longing to find – and understand – another race from somewhere 'over the rainbow'. Some ufologists, however, feel that this sympathetic portrayal of aliens is merely a form of propaganda – preparing us to meet our planet's 'true rulers'

subject, which we must study fully.' They also launched an appeal for UFO reports.

Shortly after this, however, Zigel suddenly adopted a low profile. When US journalists Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder visited the USSR in the late 1960s to collect material for their *Psychic discoveries behind the Iron Curtain* the only scientist concerned they were not allowed to meet was Felix Zigel.

On 14 June 1980 at 11.50 p.m. an orange horseshoe-shaped UFO appeared in the sky to the north-west of Moscow: it was seen by thousands of people. The giant object actually cruised over the streets of the capital, causing great panic. Some people fled into fall-out shelters believing that the Third World War had started – but the object moved away without harming anyone. And next day the Soviet media made no mention of this event. However – somewhat oddly, in view of his strange reticence on the subject of UFOs – Zigel suddenly spoke of craft detaching themselves from the horseshoe-shaped 'mother ship' and disgorging aliens onto the streets of Moscow. Yet Zigel must have known that the 'UFO' was very probably the satellite Cosmos 1188 shortly after its launch from a site at Plesetsk, just north of Moscow. Western scientists were well aware of this and – although ordinary Soviet citizens are generally kept in the dark about their own government's activities – Zigel, as a trainer of cosmonauts, must have known about it. His extraordinary claims may, in fact, be proof that he had been finally let into the secrets contained in the 1500 official UFO reports – on condition, presumably, that he became a pawn of the Soviet government. And this may have involved using unlikely UFO stories to act as a cover for some kind of secret government activities.

Right: Dr Felix Zigel, one of the few officially approved ufologists of the USSR – yet even he seemed compelled to take part in blatant UFO cover ups

Although Zigel has published many articles about UFOs in the USSR, he seems to be very reluctant to share his data with ufologists elsewhere. Perhaps it is simply too problematic to smuggle information out of the country, but others have managed to do so – albeit with some difficulty. Nikita Schnee is one Soviet ufologist who regularly sends UFO reports to the West; commenting on Zigel's cases he says: 'We checked them out and not a single one was found to be true!'

Schnee works at a scientific research establishment and, together with fellow scientist Vladimir Azhazha, attempted to set up a private UFO research institute between 1978 and 1979. But they were continually blocked by the Communist Party who, announcing that the study of UFOs was 'anti-state', broke up their meetings. Zigel is alleged to have telephoned Schnee and said, 'Well, they dispersed you, eh! I fixed that for you!'

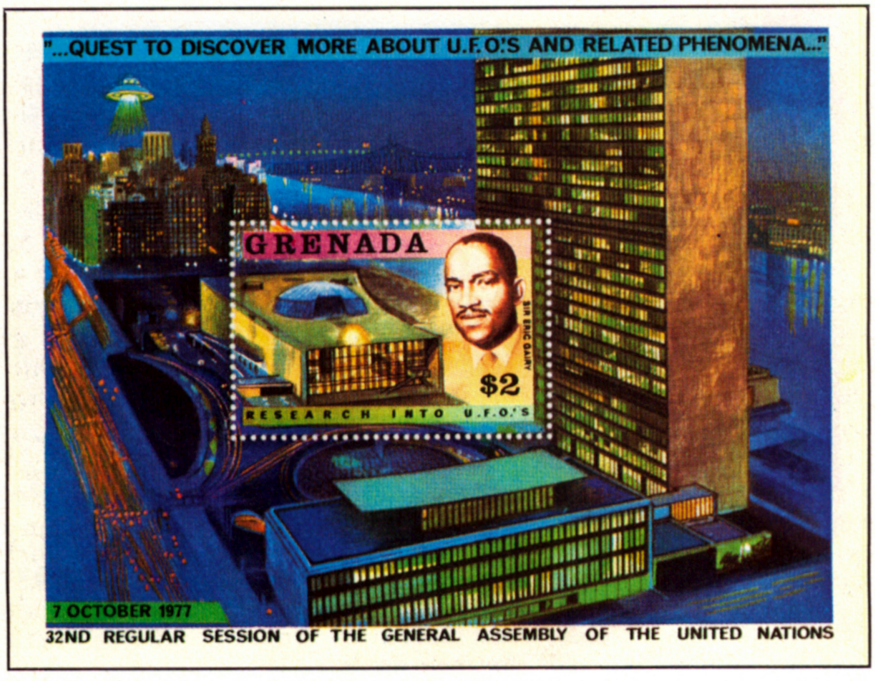
## Closely guarded secrets?

Juri Lina is another Soviet ufologist who has sent UFO reports to the West that mirror the characteristics of typical cases elsewhere, including close encounters. However, Lina has suffered too. He claims he was persecuted because of his activities and eventually managed to escape by entering into an arranged marriage with a Finnish ufologist. Although he now lives in Finland, Lina returns to the USSR to lecture about UFOs – and, he says, the KGB still watches him closely. The only realistic conclusion about ufology in the USSR is that it is seen as dangerous – and therefore must be of great interest to the government.

The Australian authorities, on the other hand, seem only too eager to give researchers unlimited access to their UFO files. In late 1981 ufologist Bill Chalker was suddenly given the opportunity to see the UFO reports then in the possession of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). During 1982 Chalker took up the offer with enthusiasm; he was even allowed to copy whatever he wanted – although, reasonably enough, he was required to sign a waiver to guarantee the confidentiality of the witnesses involved. No other restrictions were imposed on him.

The cases reported in the RAAF files apparently gave rise to the official pronouncement that 'nothing that has arisen from the three or four per cent of unexplained cases gives any firm support for the belief that interlopers from other places in the world, or outside it, have been visiting us.' However, according to Bill Chalker, many of the cases are extremely provocative.

Typical of these is the series of amazing events that took place around Brisbane airport on 4 November 1976. Ground staff saw


"...QUEST TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT U.F.O.'S AND RELATED PHENOMENA..."
GRENADA
$2
RESEARCH INTO U.F.O.'S
7 OCTOBER 1977
32ND REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Above: a postage stamp from Grenada, clearly showing its government's interest in UFOs

a pulsing light in the sky, and the crew of an Elektra transport aircraft observed the same object keeping pace with them before moving off southwards at one and a half times their speed. A commercial jet was also 'paced' and a nearby light aircraft reported a close encounter. Both local weather radar and the airport radar tracked an unidentified object that seemed to match the sightings. The conclusion of the report in the RAAF files is that the light was 'most probably the planet Venus' and the radar returns 'ships at sea' – although the pilots all refuted the suggestion that they had been 'paced' by a planet, and the highly experienced radar operators said that they had never before picked up echoes from ships.

The RAAF had pursued the usual official line of enquiry, based entirely on concern over a possible threat to national defence. No scientific study was undertaken. Significantly, the files contain memoranda that suggest that some RAAF personnel were aware that a cover up would be suspected. One of them says: 'We only foster the incorrect (but nevertheless widely held) belief that we have much vital information to hide.'

Bill Chalker concludes that the openness of the assistance he was offered and the contents of the files themselves militate against the idea of an official cover up. In fact, the files indicate that the RAAF was as puzzled as anyone else about the UFO phenomenon – and there are many other cases, Chalker points out, that do not appear in the RAAF files – some of which 'are at the very least highly provocative'.

In 1981 Australia passed its own Freedom of Information Act – the consequences of which opened the official files to Bill Chalker. But perhaps such apparent openness is merely an attempt to discourage ufologists to investigate further.

Below: Bill Chalker, an Australian ufologist who was actually offered top secret UFO documents by his government – but why?

**Further reading**

J. C. Bourret, *The crack in the Universe*, Ace Books 1956
J. Allen Hynek, *The Hynek UFO report*, Sphere 1978
Edward J. Ruppelt, *Unidentified flying objects*, Ace Books 1956

If one looks at the official changes of attitude to UFOs since the 1970s a clear pattern seems to emerge. Spain released its files to interested parties in 1976; the Blue Book documents were made accessible to the US public in 1977; France set up an official UFO study group – which made some interesting statements (see page 2869) – in the late 1970s; and in 1981 Australia opened its files. In 1982 Britain announced that its UFO files would be made public. In every case, the country concerned has maintained for years that UFOs do not exist, or that no such files have been kept.

### The real E.T.

All of this may, of course, simply be a coincidence. And perhaps such movies as *Close encounters of the third kind* (1977) have created such a sense of unease in the public mind that governments have felt compelled to reassure people that there is, in fact, no sinister cover up – and so have released their files for public scrutiny. That may not be the whole story, however.

The fact that governments all over the world have kept records of UFO cases – and some of them spent vast sums of money on official studies of them – attests to the mystery surrounding the phenomenon. And the fact that no government has claimed to solve the enigma must be significant.

One apparently extraordinary explanation of the official attitude to UFOs has been put forward by the Earl of Clancarty – otherwise known as the UFO writer Brinsley le Poer Trench – who believes that there has, indeed, been a world-wide UFO cover up, but that it is gradually being replaced by a subtle 'UFO education' programme of which few people are aware. Lord Clancarty asserts that we are being conditioned to accept the truth; perhaps even enormously popular movies such as *E.T. – the extra-terrestrial*, where the alien is presented as extremely lovable, are part of this education campaign. Nobody will fear UFOs any more.

But if this is true, what are we being prepared for? Lord Clancarty – together with an increasing number of other ufologists – suspects that UFOs represent the real rulers of this planet. And such a revelation could not be sprung on the world without the most appalling panic; hence the need for the re-education programme.

If this is the real reason for the curiously inconsistent behaviour of the world governments over the UFO issue, then they have an unenviable task ahead of them – to ensure that the millions of people on Earth, of widely different cultures, are prepared to receive the greatest news story ever. Yet the world has a right to know the truth about UFOs, be it disappointingly mundane or as astoundingly significant as Lord Clancarty's theory suggests. The evidence seems to point to a move towards discovering the truth. Are the days of the cover up nearly over?

*continued from back cover*

The principal aim of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) when it was set up in 1882 – with Myers as one of its founder members – was to investigate scientifically claims that life continues in some form after death. No satisfactory proofs have emerged, although Dr Rupert Sheldrake, author of the controversial theory of formative causation (see page 1141), has recently lent the debate scientific respectability by advancing cogent arguments that convince me, at least, that the mind is separate from the brain and that therefore the survival of the mind after bodily death is, at least in principle, perfectly possible (see page 1941). Such learned discussion is entirely in the spirit of the original SPR – but it is, I think, perhaps more than its present membership deserves.

**Psychical research and parapsychology**

As the 20th century progressed the SPR's psychical research turned into parapsychology, a would-be respectable science concerned with investigating such phenomena as paranormal metal bending and inventing jargon with which to describe such activities. Many of the experimenters have been invited to speak at SPR conferences, and many of these have been covered by staff members of *The Unexplained*. A very few of the lectures are eye-openers – the rest tend to have the opposite effect. Speakers continually draw one's attention to columns of figures on blackboards or equations (and one never does discover what *n* equals) in morose attempts to prove that none of their experiments in precognition in goldfish had any results above chance. Not all the discussions, however, are so drearily pointless. One can always be sure of controversy from Dr Carl Sargent, whose telepathy experiments show results at levels significantly above chance (see page 1430). The same is true of Julian Isaacs, to whom non-touch metal bending and teleportation of objects are everyday occurrences. Non-touch metal bending seems to me to be one of the most spectacular and easily verifiable of all the paranormal phenomena currently under investigation; and I have myself bent a fork just by stroking it – a small achievement, but mine own.

Another figure whose presence always provokes heated debate is Dr Sue Blackmore, who was once described by Julian Isaacs as 'the lady with the distinction of demolishing ESP single-handed'. She has for some years been investigating out-of-the-body experiences (OOBEs, see page 101), and has concluded that they are the products of 'imagination' – although she, like the rest of us, can offer no definition of that word. Paranormal phenomena, it seems, resolutely bypass Dr Blackmore, who touchingly asked the participants at the SPR's centenary conference to vouchsafe a place within parapsychology for such sceptics as herself. But while scepticism can be a healthy thing in the casual reader or amateur researcher, it occurs to me to wonder at the ethics of conducting hopeless experiments as a member of one of Britain's hard-up universities. Yet no conference would be complete without Dr Blackmore's question times, during which it would, one sometimes feels, be advisable to wear a tin hat. As Dr Sargent said, 'You can't sit on the fence in this business – it's covered in barbed wire.'

**Bouquet of barbed wire?**

Where other aspects of the paranormal are concerned, however, I have to admit that I should like to do just that, barbed wire or not. UFOs, for example, have me completely foxed. Before working on *The Unexplained* I believed they existed and were alien craft. I still believe they exist, but have not the slightest idea what they are. Apparently ufologists don't know, either.

I find strange human abilities – firewalking and healing, for example – fascinating and exciting, for they argue for the existence of extraordinary powers – just waiting to be tapped – in all of us. And without descending to the trite vocabulary of 'love, peace, oneness' of the New Agers, I do believe that we are on the brink of a tremendous breakthrough involving these hidden powers in some way. It may be a cure for cancer, it may be instant travel by teleportation, it may be an outbreak of mass telepathy – or it may be yet another of the false dawns that so characterise the world of the paranormal.

But my greatest hero in this strange world remains Charles Fort, that tireless chronicler of bizarre and amusing phenomena (see page 1721). And the weird phenomena go on: things continue to fall out of clear blue skies – green frogs, eggs, lumps of ice. Is somebody trying to tell us something?

Three years ago I thought I knew a few answers. Now I'm not sure that I know the questions. This may be all the progress that I'm going to make, but it's been fascinating becoming confused.

# Goodbye to all that?

**The staff of *The Unexplained* are a mixed bunch of believers and sceptics of varying degrees. How has working on the magazine changed their attitude to the paranormal? Has it made them more inclined to believe the extraordinary claims made on its behalf, or more cautious? Deputy editor LYNN PICKNETT describes her own experience**

'You don't believe in all that, do you?' is the standard response to the discovery that I work on *The Unexplained*. It is, of course, an impossible question to answer – 'all that' covers a whole host of very different aspects of 'mysteries of mind, space and time'; everything from black holes to fake mediums and bending metal without touching it. Many people do, however, believe in 'all that' – and I suppose I used to be one of them. As a child I had experiences that suggested that there might be something in claims for the paranormal – strange raps, visions, lucid dreams, seeing a ghost. And luckily I don't suffer from what Brian Inglis calls retrocognitive dissonance (the diminishing, with the passage of time, of belief in witnessed phenomena). I know what I experienced. But working on *The Unexplained* for nearly three years, and meeting all manner of people connected with the fascinating subject of the paranormal, I no longer accept all the claims lock, stock and barrel; at least, now, I know what I don't like.

I've tried to appreciate ectoplasm, for example, but as a phenomenon and especially as a substance it is hard to love. I have grown deeply suspicious of the whole Spiritualist world – with the exception of the clairaudient Doris Stokes (see page 441), whom I have seen in action several times and whose gifts, whatever their explanation, are genuine, and the great Victorian medium D.D. Home (see page 2390), who strikes me as having exhibited authentic talents, however bizarrely pointless they seem to have been.

However, seance rooms are, on the whole, no longer infested with crawling strands of ectoplasm – its heyday was in the late Victorian and early Edwardian period. One Victorian medium, however, produced a living, breathing materialisation out of thin air – or rather, out of a curtained cabinet. Florence Cook was the medium and Katie King (see page 802) her supreme achievement, an elegantly beshrouded young dead person who exhibited a tendency to clutch male sitters and who bore a strong resemblance to her medium.

I have been accused of prejudice against Florence/Katie, but the photographs of the two women together, and of Katie on her own, are risible – the resemblance is clear. And it is not enough to learn that Florence Cook's sponsor and investigator was the great scientist Sir William Crookes, and to infer that his evidence is therefore beyond question. Nothing, especially in psychical research, is ever that.

**Yodelling in Latvian**

Leaving aside the authenticity of Spiritualist phenomena, I have come to the conclusion that – even if they are genuine – they are no proof of the survival of bodily death, despite what is so often claimed for them. In every case I have come across there is an equally convincing explanation in terms of telepathy, clairvoyance or cryptomnesia. Table-turning was one of the early Spiritualist phenomena hailed as the tearing of the veil between this world and the next, and in more recent times it has been claimed that the humble tape recorder can pick up the voices of the dead in what are called electronic voice phenomena (see page 398). Unfortunately, spirits that appear to be yodelling through extruded polystyrene in Latvian have not noticeably eased communications between the two worlds and certainly do not prove that the other world exists – although one can sympathise with the comment allegedly made from beyond the grave by the pioneer parapsychologist Frederic Myers on the difficulty of communicating through mediums:

> The nearest simile I can find to express the difficulty of sending a message – is that I appear to be standing behind a sheet of frosted glass which blurs sight and deadens sound — dictating feebly to a reluctant and somewhat obtuse secretary.

*continued overleaf*